

*Botsford
PCM-J*

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-222001

DATE: June 2, 1986

MATTER OF: Bonnie J. Zachary - Transportation of
Mobile Home

DIGEST:

A transferred employee who transported her mobile home from her old to her new duty station is entitled to reimbursement for the transportation of a mobile home, in lieu of expenses for shipment of household goods, since she used the mobile home as her residence at her new duty station. However, she is not entitled to any additional miscellaneous expenses above an amount equivalent to 2 weeks of her basic salary.

An authorized certifying officer with the National Finance Center, United States Department of Agriculture, has asked whether a transferred employee, who has already received a miscellaneous expenses allowance equivalent to 2 weeks of her basic salary, may be reimbursed additional amounts for miscellaneous expenses. We hold that, although the employee, Bonnie J. Zachary, is not entitled to reimbursement of additional miscellaneous expenses, she is entitled to reimbursement for the expenses she incurred in transporting her mobile home from her old to her new duty station.

Ms. Zachary was transferred by the Forest Service from Halfway, Oregon, to Baker, Oregon. By a travel authorization dated August 12, 1985, she was authorized transportation of her immediate family, transportation and temporary storage of her household goods, temporary quarters subsistence expenses and a miscellaneous expenses allowance. Ms. Zachary traveled to her new duty station on August 29, 1985. Rather than selling her mobile home in Halfway, she decided to move it to Baker for use as her permanent residence there.

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In connection with her move, Ms. Zachary incurred miscellaneous expenses in the amount of \$1,181.71, primarily related to the relocation of her mobile home. She was reimbursed \$588.80, an amount equal to 2 weeks of her basic salary, but she received no reimbursement for costs associated with the transportation of her mobile home. The National Finance Center suspended payment for the mobile home expenses on the ground that such expenses must be specifically authorized.

Ms. Zachary submitted a reclaim voucher for \$592.91, representing the difference between the total expenses she incurred and the amount she was reimbursed. She claims she is entitled to the additional reimbursement because her decision to move her mobile home resulted in far less cost to the Government than if she had sold the mobile home and bought a residence at her new duty station.

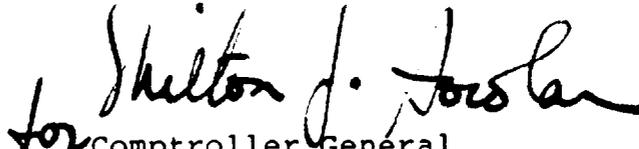
An employee transferred in the interest of the Government is entitled to a miscellaneous expense allowance under 5 U.S.C. § 5724a(b). For an employee with an immediate family, such as Ms. Zachary, both the statute and the implementing regulations limit reimbursement to an amount not to exceed 2 weeks' basic pay. See 5 U.S.C. § 5724a(b), and paragraph 2-3.3a(2) of the Federal Travel Regulations (Supp. 4, Aug. 23, 1982), incorp. by ref. 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003 (1985) (FTR). We cannot waive the limits prescribed by these authorities, even though Ms. Zachary chose a method of relocating which was less costly to the Government than the method she was authorized to use. Therefore, Ms. Zachary is not entitled to any additional miscellaneous expense reimbursement.

However, where an employee transports a mobile home used as a residence, and the employee would otherwise be entitled to transportation of household goods, 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) provides that the employee is entitled to reimbursement for the cost of transporting the mobile home. See FTR paragraph 2-7.1a (Supp. 1, Sept. 28, 1981). Thus, we have held that where an employee was originally authorized payment of expenses for the shipment of household goods, he was entitled to expenses for the movement of a mobile home, in lieu of expenses for shipment of the household goods, if he certified that the mobile home was to be

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used as a residence at his new duty station. B-172536, August 17, 1972. See also 51 Comp. Gen. 27 (1971). Under the statute and the Federal Travel Regulations, no specific authorization is required.

Since there appears to be no question that Ms. Zachary is using her mobile home as her residence, she should be reimbursed for the transportation of the mobile home in accordance with the regulations cited above.

for 
Comptroller General
of the United States